

# Southern Area Predictive Services

## Daily Fire/All Hazards Weather Summary and Outlook

May 12, 2006

1. **Red Flag Warnings:** Warnings are in effect for Florida for long durations of low humidities in the mid 20%s (north) to low 30%s (south), along with gusty winds up to 25 mph. Red Flags are also in effect for southwest Texas for low humidities (upper teens) and gusty winds to 18 mph.
2. **Fire Weather Watches:** No Watches are posted for today, but have been issued for Saturday for much of Florida for low humidity.
3. **Overall Potential For Significant Management/Resource Activity:**  
Much above average for FL. Average and below average potential elsewhere. With more rain activity expected during the last half of May, we expect FL fire danger to be trending downward.
4. **Weather For Existing Significant, Uncontained Fires (>= 10 acres)/High Danger Areas:**

### Florida

Day	Area Weather	High Temperatures	Minimum Relative Humidity	Wind
1	Mostly Sunny	Near 80 north to near 90 south	20%s north to lower 30%s south	West/northwest to 15 mph with gusts to 25 mph.
2	Partly cloudy with slight chance for light rain showers north. Mostly sunny south.	Mostly 80s	Upper 30%s north to near 30% south	West/northwest to 12 mph.

### 5. **Today's Fire/All Hazards Weather Summary and Outlook**

Post cold frontal high pressure will produce fair weather and cooler temperatures for the southern half of the South. With the cooler air come lower humidities, which are producing another round of Red Flag low RH conditions for Florida through Saturday. In addition, a tight pressure gradient will produce gusty winds for areas of the southeast. For the Ohio and Tennessee Valley, skies will be cloudier with intermittent opportunities for light shower activity courtesy of a large low pressures system over the Great Lakes. Our west will be clear and rain free, with low humidity conditions producing Red Flag Warnings for southwest Texas.

24 hour rainfall summary: widespread trace to 0.25" rainfall was reported over an area from KY/TN to the Appalachian Mountains and eastern VA. In addition, 0.25" to 0.5" rain amounts fell over the southern FL Panhandle and across the central-northern portions of peninsular FL. Even the southern tip of TX received trace to 0.5" amounts of rain.

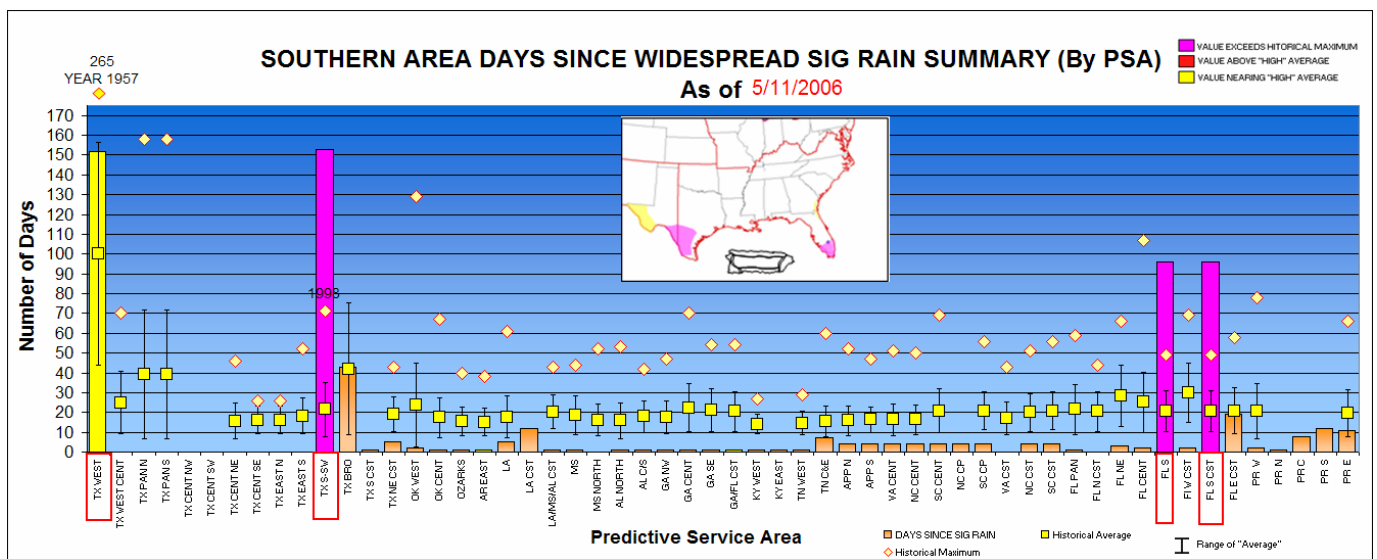
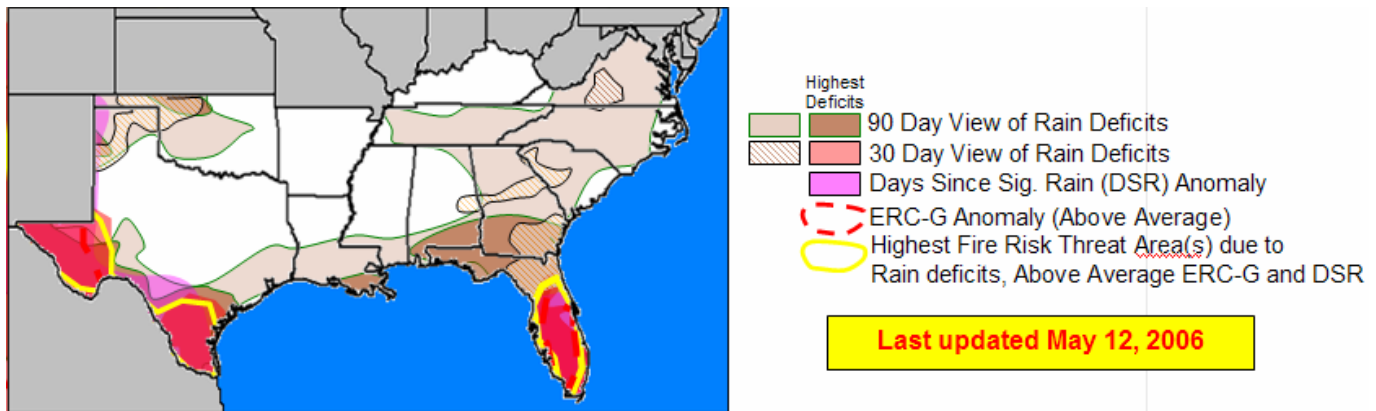
### 6. **Tropical Weather Summary**

No activity. With a little over 20 days before the official start of the 2006 Hurricane season, tropical Atlantic temperatures continue to run a very warm 1-1.5C above average and temperatures in the northern Gulf of Mexico 2-3 C above average. Most of the Caribbean Sea now has surface temperatures at the 80 degree threshold temperature, about 0.5 degrees C above average due to rapid warming during late April. A ridge of high pressure has been dominating the southern Atlantic and Caribbean the last couple of months; this is more characteristic of the summertime pattern and favorable for tropical storm formation.

### 7. **Fire Behavior**

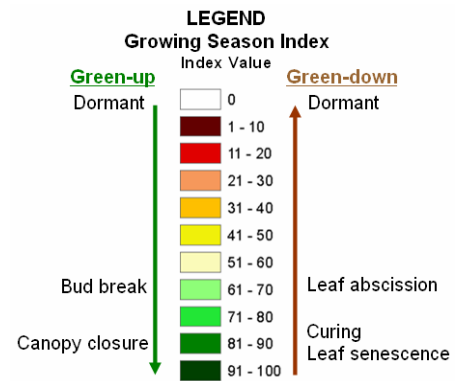
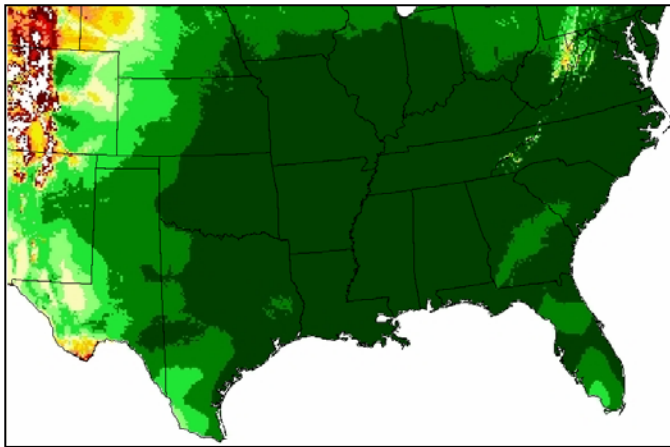
Product currently inactive.

## 8. Significant Fire Risk Factors, DSR Summaries and Regional Perspectives



**Days Since Significant Rain Summary ( $\geq 0.25''$ )** – La Nina conditions currently present in the Pacific will result in a continuing pattern of below average rainfall for Virginia, the Carolinas, Florida, southern portions of the Gulf Coastal states, and of course western Oklahoma and Texas. Consequently, fire activity continues to increase over Florida as we move through spring. Recent rains over the last 30 days from widespread thunderstorm activity from the Mississippi River Valley westward have significantly reduced the areas of 30 day and severe 90+ day drought conditions. However, very dry conditions still persist in a crescent shaped area from western OK to west TX to south TX. Despite green-up here, higher fire danger will wax and wane through the rest of the year.

**Green-up Assessment.** In general, green-up is now in full force across the South. We will need to watch the ongoing/worsening drought conditions that would cause GSI values to drop below 75, indicating vegetative stress from drought conditions and potentially higher drought fuel loading. The experimental map below, available at <http://phenmon.org/maps/>, depicts the current Growing Season Index. Developed by Dr. Matt Jolly, the colorized index depicts where the interaction of thermal, hydrological, and solar parameters necessary for plant activity in general support (greens) or don't support (yellows and reds) cellular processes. The critical threshold for any vegetative activity is 50 (on a scale to 0 to 100). This map can be used as a *broad guide* in assessing the extent and level of green-up across the south.



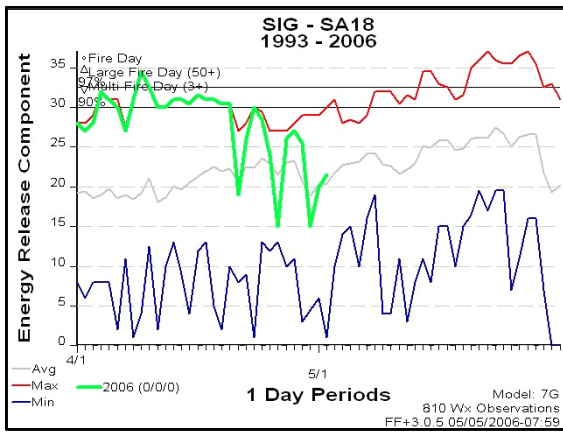
**Last updated May 12, 2006**

## Regional Perspectives

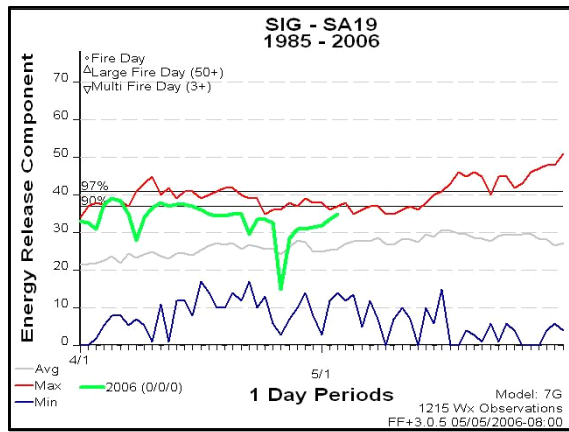
**OK/TX** - The main 30/90 day deficit area remains over west and south-southwest Texas, as well as the eastern TX Panhandle. This is where fire danger will persist, with the broader western TX/OK areas continuing to wax and wane through the year. SW Texas' historical DSR maximum is 265, set back in 1957. A wetter pattern from late April into May will continue to minimize much of the extreme fire potential due to ongoing short/long term drought conditions.

**Mid-Atlantic** - Recent rain fall has essentially erased the 30 day deficits, however 2" to 10" 90 day deficits persist across western VA and NC with green-up now in full force. Because of the longer term deficits, drought fuel loading will be a key factor in the ongoing fire danger mix. The combination of a wetter May trend leading into summertime rain activity and the 2006 hurricane season (expected to be again above average), will ultimately be the recovery mechanism to the longer duration drought conditions.

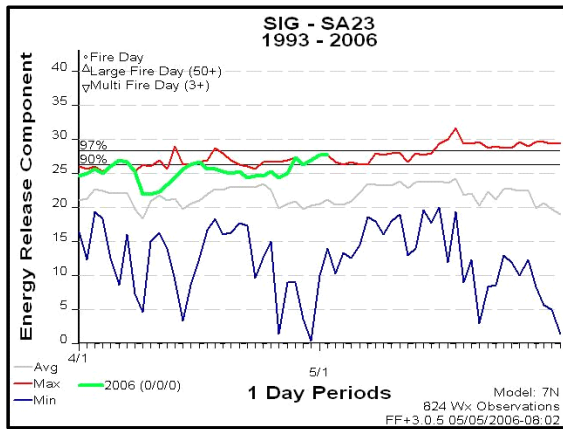
**The Central Gulf Coast and FL** - Florida and isolated areas of the central Gulf Coast continue to be of concern as anomalous drought conditions persist due to La Nina impacts. While recent moderate to heavy rains across the central Gulf states (1" to 3"+) have mitigated most of the fire danger concerns, 7" to 10"+ 90 day deficits remain. Days Since Significant Rain counts across central and south FL are nearing 100, which is almost 5 times the May average (about 20) and double the previous historical max of about 50. In addition, ERCs (as you would expect) are setting new historical highs. The short term and longer term deficits **are especially disconcerting, given this dry area encompasses the very heavy dead fuel loadings in the blow down areas from LA to FL from last year's hurricane activity. Expect continued very high fire danger for FL.**



LA/MS Coast



FL Panhandle




South FL

## SOUTHERN AREA-WIDE WEATHER TRENDS SUMMARY

For the Period of May 14 to May 26, 2006  
Issued May 11, 2006

The trend for higher rain activity and cooler weather will continue, with west Texas the one area missing out on any significant rain.

### SPECIFIC 10+ DAY TRENDS SUMMARY

 Light green color fill indicates the occurrence of a more significant precipitation event (coverage, duration, or amount), summertime unsettled period with widespread rainfall from area-wide afternoon shower/thunderstorms activity, or a period of higher humidities with widespread areas of intermittent precipitation (rain/snow) activity.

<b><u>Approx. Time Period</u></b>	<b><u>Red Flag Threat</u></b>	<b><u>Significant Weather and General Trends Summary</u></b>
May 14-18 Sun-Thurs	FL 14th	The second in a series of three cold fronts will move quickly into and through the South, producing widespread areas of significant rain with more thunderstorms and severe weather. 0.25" to 0.75"+ rain amounts are expected – especially for the central Gulf Coast and the Mid Atlantic areas. The frontal boundary is expected to move through FL, creating better chances for at least some wetting rains for the Everglades region. Another shot of colder air will drop into the South from May 16-19, while rain activity continues for the OH/TN Valleys and Mid-Atlantic.
May 18-21 Thurs-Sun		Low pressure in the eastern Great Lakes will pull another cold front into Oklahoma and Arkansas. Widespread rains are expected in KY and VA, with showers extending southwestward across most of AR and a small portion of northeast TX. The front moves to the Atlantic Coast on May 19, but remains an active rain maker for the Gulf Coast and extreme eastern Texas. Rain chances increase for southern Florida on May 21-22. The front will provide some instability and may allow some interaction with easterly waves.
May 22 Mon	FL Panhandle May 22	There will be a brief respite from wet weather as high pressure settles into the Ohio and Tennessee Valleys. Even during this time, another impulse will travel along a nearly stationary boundary, producing showers for OK/AR/LA.
May 23-26 Tues-Fri		More showers move into the Ohio and Mid-Mississippi River Valleys and then overspread most areas east of the Mississippi River on May 24. Most areas of FL will be dry on May 24, but rain will return on May 25 and 26. By May 24, we may begin to see some tropical development.